

[Texas's 20th Congressional District](#) encompasses over half of San Antonio, parts of Bexar county and the communities of Leon Valley, Balcones Heights, and Kirby. The district's heart is the downtown of San Antonio which is home to the Alamo, the Tower of the Americas, La Villita, and the Paseo del Rio, or Riverwalk. To the southwest lie Lackland Air Force Base and the now-closed Kelly Air Force base, two of the four bases in San Antonio that earned the city the moniker "Military City, USA."

As throughout its storied history, San Antonio continues to be the crossroads of many different cultures and traditions. From the original Native American tribes to the Spanish missionaries to the early Mexican republic to the German settlers to the cowboys of the cattle trails to the grandeur and majesty of the Old South to the military bases, San Antonio represents the beautiful tapestry of the myriad influences and styles of South Texas. Founded in 1718 when Father Antonio Olivares established the Mission San Antonio de Valero, America's seventh largest city and Texas' most popular tourist destination sits at the edge of Central and South Texas, at the intersection of the lush, green Hill Country and the semi-arid, semi-tropical Rio Grande Plain. San Antonio is positioned atop the Edwards Aquifer, an underground, natural repository for the groundwater from Central Texas and one of the world's most amazing ecosystems, which makes life on a large scale possible for South Texas.

San Antonio serves as a major conduit for commerce and people. Located at the intersection of three major highways, I-10, I-35, and I-37, and a major rail connection, the city brings together the disparate strands of South Texas and Latin America at the beginning of the 21st century as it has in years past. During the late 19th

century, San Antonio was the starting point for the great cattle drives northward to rail spurs and, ultimately, to the stockyards of Chicago.

Considered the birthplace of the Republic of Texas, San Antonio is home to the Alamo, the mission where 189 Texans held off a force of at least 2,500 Mexican troops for 13 days in the first battle for independence. Although ultimately defeated, Texans used the memory of that battle to rally and overthrow the Mexican dictator, Santa Ana, at the battle of San Jacinto where the charging troops cried out, "Remember the Alamo!" The restored Alamo now serves as the emotional center for San Antonio and all of the Lone Star State as Texans often make the pilgrimage to San Antonio to visit this veritable shrine. Frank Tolbert, a noted Texas historian and journalist, once said, "Every Texan has two homes: his own and San Antonio."

As Texas' most popular tourist destination, San Antonio boasts a number of unique attractions. The Riverwalk's limestone and concrete sidewalks hug the San Antonio River as it bisects the city and are lined with restaurants, shops, and hotels. Underneath the towering cypresses, oaks, and willows, tourists stroll along the river towards La Villita, the first neighborhood of San Antonio. Home to Spanish and later German settlers, La Villita was restored in the 1930s and now houses a vibrant art community. The San Fernando Cathedral was built by Canary Island settlers in 1731, houses the diocese of San Antonio, and sits at the geographical center of the city. Tourists also flock to Market Square (El Mercado), the largest Mexican marketplace outside of Mexico where numerous shops sell goods and products indigenous to the region.

The 20th district boasts a storied military tradition as the home of our nation's first military aviation base, Kelly, which later became an Air Force Base until it was closed in 2001. Lackland AFB, "The Gateway to the Air Force," still serves as the only basic training site for the Air Force, however, so San Antonio experiences an influx of new recruits every six weeks. Lackland is also the home of the [Twenty-Fourth Air Force](#) who are responsible for cyber warfare in the Department of Defense. Moreover, many veterans have retired to San Antonio which has further deepened the city's military heritage.

Not a city content to rely on its rich historical and cultural legacies, San Antonio has embraced the 21st century global economy. At Toyota's light-truck factory, opened south of the city in 2003, nearly 2,000 people turn out hundreds of thousands of vehicles a year. As the home of SBC and Clear Channel, San Antonio also has a presence in two cutting edge, high-tech fields. USAA, which also calls the 20th District home, is one of America's largest and most diverse financial services companies.